



Patricia Free O'Connor

July 28, 1931 - August 11, 2025

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Patricia Free O'Connor passed away peacefully in her sleep on August 11th at her McAuley Retirement home in West Hartford, CT. She was 94.

Pat was born on July 28, 1931, in New Rochelle, NY, the second of three daughters of Adele and Walter Free, and was raised in Bronxville, NY. Pat's older sister, Adele Blaine Free, passed in 2021. Pat is survived by her younger sister, Blaine Free Foltz, 81, of Reno, NV. Pat graduated in 1949 from Mary Burnham School in Northampton, MA. She attended the University of Wisconsin, Madison, graduating in 1953 with a degree in Home Economics.

Pat then started her career as an underwriter at New York Life Insurance in New York City. While in Manhattan, she met Richard Walsh O'Connor at a St. Patrick's Day party. As they would both recall with twinkling eyes, they married quickly and lived forty-eight happy years together until Richard passed in 2006. Full of love and laughter, their marriage was a remarkable success. While tempered with tears and tragedy, their union stood the test of time, serving as an inspiration to their children.

Starting their family in Huntington, Long Island, Pat and Dick had four

children: two girls, Patricia Walsh, 66 of E. Windsor, CT; Anne Free (d.), followed by two boys: Richard Walsh, Jr., 61 of Atherton, CA; and John Blaine, 57 of Hartford, CT. Anne Free (O'Connor Hutchins) predeceased her in 2022 at the age of 61. The growing O'Connor family moved to 40 Newport Ave, West Hartford, CT, in 1964. After 50 happy years in their home, Pat moved to McAuley Retirement home for the remaining 11 years of her life. Pat has five grandchildren: Constantine Hutchins IV, 34, of Hartland, VT; Alison Blaine Hutchins, 33; Maggie Hutchins, 28, both of Greensboro, NC; Catherine O'Connor, 20; and Shannon O'Connor, 19, both of Atherton, CA.

Pat's love of children transcended her own. Soon after John was born, she started a play school for all the neighborhood kids, rendering the backyard idyllic for a child, chock full of jungle gyms, see-saws, whirly-go-rounds, sand boxes, forts, and climbing trees, with all that play fueled by her famous PB&J sandwiches. To this day, we still get requests for Pat's famous PB&J sandwiches.

Once her kids outgrew playschool, Pat returned to a successful underwriter position at CIGNA, where she worked for twenty-one years until retirement.

While family and children were her first passion, Pat loved to sing, walk, go to the beach, play tennis, and bridge. Upon arrival in West Hartford, Pat joined the Junior League and The Distaffs singing group, later joining the church choir at St Peter Claver led by Tim Stella. A tennis enthusiast, she played at three different clubs, including Punch Brook, Red Oak Country Club, and the Hartford Tennis Club (HTC), and ultimately became the HTC president. Pat, a diehard walker, could be seen every day, rain or snow, completing her 4-mile breakneck-speed walks around the Reservoir.

In her final years, she found joy in her extended family, her lifetime friends residing at McAuley, and attending service at St Peter Claver. She and her

family are especially grateful for the peerless care and love provided by Luba and Donna of Polish Care and Carmen.

Pat will be remembered for her remarkable kindness, optimism, laughter, and humility.

Funeral service will be held at 10 am, Saturday, September 6, at St Peter Claver of West Hartford, followed by a celebration of life at McAuley at noon. Instead of flowers, donations may be made to Catholic Charities.

Cemetery Details

Fairview Cemetery

200 Whitman Ave.
West Hartford, CT

Previous Events

Funeral Mass

SEP 6. 10:00 AM (ET)

Church of St. Peter Claver
47 Pleasant St.
West Hartford, CT

Celebration of Life

SEP 6. 12:00 PM (ET)

The McAuley
275 Steele Rd.
West Hartford, CT

Tribute Wall

BM

“ Benin M. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Patricia Free O'Connor.

Benin M. - September 05, 2025 at 01:27 PM

FS

“ from Liuba Stefak purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Patricia Free O'Connor.



from Liuba Stefak - September 05, 2025 at 12:00 AM

FS

“ from Liuba Stefak planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Patricia Free O'Connor.

from Liuba Stefak - September 05, 2025 at 12:00 AM